

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2018

The Honorable Pete Sessions
Chairman
Committee on Rules
U.S. House of Representatives
H-312, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James McGovern
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules
U.S. House of Representatives
H-312, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member McGovern:

As you consider amendments for the House's debate on this year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we urge you to allow debate and a vote on our amendment to replace the two current Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMFs) with an updated one.

We are Members on the Armed Services Committee as well as Members of the wider House who believe that it is long past time for Congress to debate and reconsider the authorities underpinning our wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere. No U.S. war has lasted longer, and our bipartisan effort to defend our country from terrorists has forced changes to the identity, composition, tactics, and strategy of the enemies we face today. As the times and circumstances change so should the AUMF.

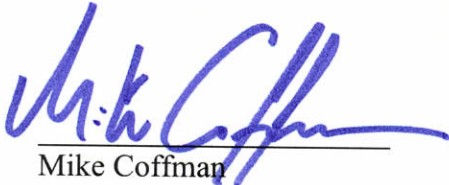
The current AUMFs were passed in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks. While necessary at the time, world events and changes in our national security situation since their passage have rendered both legacy AUMFs obsolete.

We believe that holding this debate within the context of the NDAA is particularly appropriate. Matching defense authorization for critical national security missions with the scope and boundaries provided by a new AUMF just makes sense. Our bipartisan measure also is important for the men and women in our Armed Forces. A current AUMF lets them know that their continued actions and operations are within the bounds set by the Legislative branch of our government. This amendment would replace the existing AUMFs and make it clear that our Armed Forces continue for the next five years their efforts to destroy al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and any person or persons associated with those entities who are engaged in hostilities against the United States knowing they have the full support and backing of the Congress and the American people.

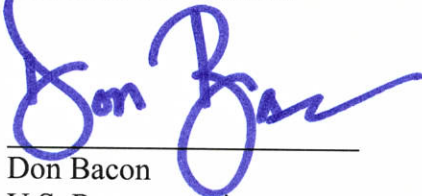
Our bill would also preclude the President from making unilateral military action beyond these bounds without further action from Congress. The five-year time limit ensures Congress would periodically need to revisit the AUMF or let it expire. This is a reasonable time frame. Critically, it would prevent unauthorized military action against sovereign nations, a measure which will ensure Congressional review if war with a foreign state becomes necessary.

Due to the above factors and the constitutional duty that we as elected officials must provide clear authorization to the men and women we send into battle, we respectfully ask that you rule our amendment in order and allow the full House to consider and debate it.

Sincerely,



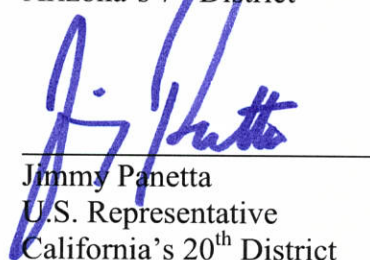
Mike Coffman
U.S. Representative
Colorado's 6th District



Don Bacon
U.S. Representative
Nebraska's 2nd District



Ruben Gallego
U.S. Representative
Arizona's 7th District



Jimmy Panetta
U.S. Representative
California's 20th District

CC:

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Minority Whip